



For Release: Wednesday, January 13, 2021

21-36-DAL

SOUTHWEST INFORMATION OFFICE: Dallas, Texas

Technical information: (972) 850-4800 BLSInfoDallas@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/southwest

Media contact: (972) 850-4800

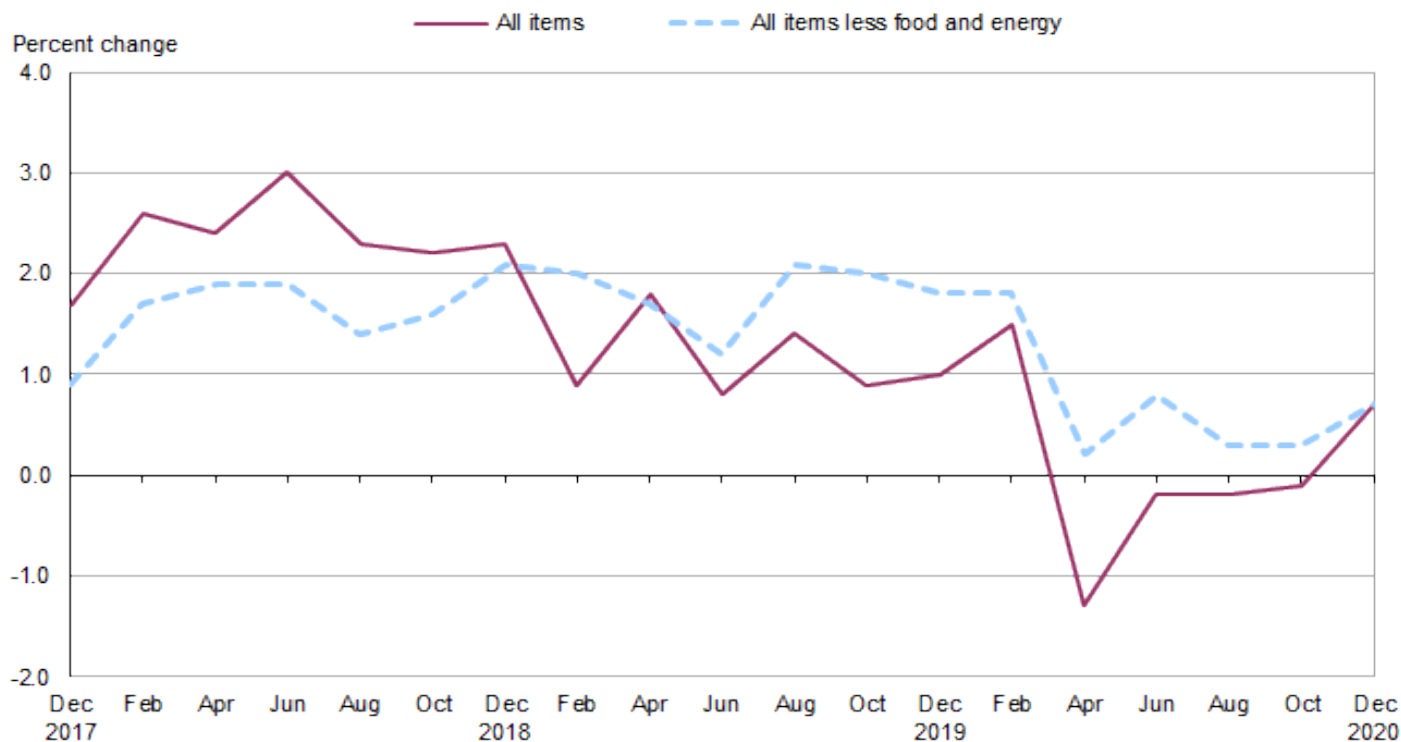
Consumer Price Index, Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land – December 2020

Area prices rise 0.2 percent in November and December, up 0.7 percent over the year

Prices in the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), crept up 0.2 percent for the two months ending in December 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Michael Hirniak noted that an increase in the index for energy, up 4.2 percent, was the largest contributor to the rise. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bi-monthly changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U advanced 0.7 percent. The index for all items less food and energy also increased 0.7 percent over the year and food prices rose 3.0 percent. Partially countering these increases, energy prices declined 3.8 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Houston, TX, December 2017–December 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Food prices rose 1.0 percent for the two months ending in December. Within the two components of the index, prices for food away from home advanced 2.8 percent, while prices for food at home declined 0.6 percent for the same period.

During the 12 months ending in December 2020, the index for food rose 3.0 percent. The rise reflected an increase in prices for both food away from home and food at home, which rose 4.3 percent and 1.7 percent, respectively.

Energy

The energy index increased 4.2 percent for the two months ending in December, after rising 2.3 percent in the two months ending in October. The latest increase was almost entirely due to higher prices for electricity (8.5 percent), but prices for gasoline also rose (0.2 percent). Prices for natural gas service were unchanged in the latest period.

From December 2019 to December 2020, the energy index declined 3.8 percent, largely due to lower prices for gasoline (-18.3 percent), but natural gas service costs also declined (-1.7 percent). Partially countering these declines, prices paid for electricity climbed 13.4 percent over the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy fell 0.2 percent in November and December, after rising 0.3 percent in September and October. The latest movement was fueled by lower prices for apparel (-3.9 percent), other goods and services (-1.7 percent), and used cars and trucks (-1.9 percent). These declines were partially offset by higher prices for shelter (0.4 percent), recreation (1.1 percent), and new vehicles (1.0 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy increased 0.7 percent. The components most contributing to the increase included shelter (1.3 percent), medical care (3.1 percent), and recreation (3.3 percent). Partly offsetting the increases were falling prices in categories including motor vehicle insurance (-11.5 percent), apparel (-4.5 percent), and education and communication (-2.1 percent).

The February 2021 Consumer Price Index for the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land area is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, March 10, 2021.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Impact on December 2020 Consumer Price Index Data

Data collection by personal visit for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) program has been suspended since March 16, 2020. When possible, data normally collected by personal visit were collected either online or by phone. Additionally, data collection in December was affected by the temporary closing or limited operations of certain types of establishments. These factors resulted in an increase in the number of prices considered temporarily unavailable and imputed. While the CPI program attempted to collect as much data as possible, many indexes are based on smaller amounts of collected prices than usual, and a small number of indexes that are normally published were not published this month. Additional information is available at www.bls.gov/covid19/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-consumer-price-index.htm.

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 93 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 29 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 5,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details, see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, *The Consumer Price Index*, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The **Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, Texas, Core Based Statistical Area** includes the counties of Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Oct. 2020	Nov. 2020	Dec. 2020	Dec. 2019	Oct. 2020	Nov. 2020
All items	229.885	-	230.388	0.7	0.2	-
All items (1967 = 100)	737.324	-	738.938			
Food and beverages	239.535	-	241.837	3.0	1.0	-
Food	239.760	-	242.249	3.0	1.0	-
Food at home	229.235	226.768	227.791	1.7	-0.6	0.5
Cereals and bakery products	274.075	-	269.976	2.6	-1.5	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	248.805	-	248.009	1.1	-0.3	-
Dairy and related products	193.051	-	192.283	10.2	-0.4	-
Fruits and vegetables	279.219	-	277.776	-4.3	-0.5	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)	274.961	-	271.601	3.4	-1.2	-
Other food at home	203.768	-	203.156	2.7	-0.3	-
Food away from home	246.178	-	252.979	4.3	2.8	-
Alcoholic beverages	224.323	-	224.234	3.7	0.0	-
Housing	229.775	-	231.835	2.3	0.9	-
Shelter	272.643	272.999	273.601	1.3	0.4	0.2
Rent of primary residence	269.307	269.554	270.346	1.9	0.4	0.3
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2)	255.450	256.028	256.605	1.6	0.5	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)	255.450	256.028	256.605	1.6	0.5	0.2
Fuels and utilities	188.316	-	198.476	11.3	5.4	-
Household energy	160.403	173.147	172.125	11.1	7.3	-0.6
Energy services	158.062	170.746	169.732	11.3	7.4	-0.6
Electricity	160.233	175.036	173.854	13.4	8.5	-0.7
Utility (piped) gas service	132.508	132.496	132.496	-1.7	0.0	0.0
Household furnishings and operations	139.980	-	140.579	1.2	0.4	-
Apparel	170.006	-	163.314	-4.5	-3.9	-
Transportation	174.008	-	172.247	-5.5	-1.0	-
Private transportation	173.100	-	172.851	-5.2	-0.1	-
New and used motor vehicles(3)	88.710	-	88.611	0.9	-0.1	-
New vehicles(1)	163.290	-	164.903	-0.7	1.0	-
Used cars and trucks(1)	251.913	-	247.122	10.4	-1.9	-
Motor fuel	160.833	156.046	161.195	-18.4	0.2	3.3
Gasoline (all types)	160.815	155.982	161.089	-18.3	0.2	3.3
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4)	160.174	155.255	160.794	-18.9	0.4	3.6
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5)	188.677	183.951	184.707	-15.6	-2.1	0.4
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4)	197.224	192.209	194.864	-14.1	-1.2	1.4
Motor vehicle insurance(1)	663.465	-	655.517	-11.5	-1.2	-
Medical care	534.462	-	533.393	3.1	-0.2	-
Recreation(3)	108.955	-	110.152	3.3	1.1	-
Education and communication(3)	120.190	-	120.049	-2.1	-0.1	-
Tuition, other school fees, and childcare(1) ...	1,258.795	-	1,258.795	1.3	0.0	-
Other goods and services	423.670	-	416.395	2.0	-1.7	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities	171.495	-	171.814	-0.4	0.2	-
Commodities less food and beverages	140.038	-	139.656	-2.3	-0.3	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	179.220	-	175.486	-7.1	-2.1	-
Durables	100.471	-	101.814	2.3	1.3	-
Services	289.635	-	290.327	1.4	0.2	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less shelter	213.815	-	214.141	0.4	0.2	-
All items less medical care	215.613	-	216.166	0.5	0.3	-
Commodities less food	142.789	-	142.413	-2.1	-0.3	-

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Oct. 2020	Nov. 2020	Dec. 2020	Dec. 2019	Oct. 2020	Nov. 2020
Nondurables	209.175	-	208.365	-1.7	-0.4	-
Nondurables less food.....	181.764	-	178.284	-6.3	-1.9	-
Services less rent of shelter(2).....	305.947	-	306.278	1.4	0.1	-
Services less medical care services.....	265.117	-	265.971	1.1	0.3	-
Energy	160.804	165.771	167.491	-3.8	4.2	1.0
All items less energy	240.014	-	239.925	1.0	0.0	-
All items less food and energy	239.900	-	239.399	0.7	-0.2	-

Footnotes

(1) Indexes on an April 1978=100 base.

(2) Indexes on a December 1982=100 base.

(3) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

(4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(5) Index on a December 1993=100.

- Data not available.